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nue to the State; but the difficutly could be obviated, if the Director of Agriculture would suggest some means by which the article could be rendered unfit for human consumption, without at the same time impairing its virtue as a manure.

Dewan's reply.—The question is an important one. On the one hand, Government are anxious to improve cocoanut cultivation by allowing the owners of cocoanut gardens to get the salt required by them for manure at cost price. At the same time, there is the practically insuperable obstacle that salt given at cost price for agricultural purposes may go into human consumption. That would be to the serious prejudice of the salt revenue. The Peishkar of the Kottayam division, the Excise Commissioner and the Director of Agriculture would be asked to meet and discuss the whole question in consultation with some of the leading ryots and to report thereon.

General interests of the trade of Alleppey.

Mr. G. H. Davey of Alleppey (Member, Nominated) observed that Alleppey's claim to be the principal port of Travancore and the centre of several large industries and manufactures would be admitted on all hands and that it would be rendered manifest by the very circumstance of the place being the headquarters of a large commerical community doing business with all parts of the world. Trade had greatly developed of recent years and begun to draw steamers of large direct lines from Europe and America. But owing to the receding of the sea during the past two years, the port had suffered considerably. He was aware that a new pier had been sanctioned by Government, but it was out of the question that the work could be completed before 1910 or 1911. He feared therefore that, in the interval, much of the trade would inevitably be diverted to Cochin. He contended that, during the past twenty years, the shipping of the world had been gradually changing from sailing vessels to steamers and that the facilities of the port, which were adequate enough in the days of sailing vessels, were altogether inadequate for steamers. A sailing vessel would remain in port for 20 or 30 days to load 800 to 1,000 tons of cargo, but a steamer would not call at the port unless she could secure 250 to 400 tons in a single day. If Government were desirous therefore of fostering and expanding the trade of Alleppey, he said that it was necessary to study the requirements which would safeguard the interests of both the Government as well as the merchants. In view of the fact that Government themselves considered it necessary to maintain a Port Officer for that purpose and that since the abolition of that office the port had suffered much, he would urge on Government

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the necessity of reviving the appointment of a European Port Officer. In making the suggestion, he added that he had the full support of the influential native merchants of Alleppey, and submitted a letter addressed to him by the merchants on the subject.

Dewan's reply.—I have heard the Member's views about the Alleppey port with interest. A Committee has been appointed to consider, among other matters, the question of the trade of Alleppey. Mr. Davey is a member of that Committee, and I have no doubt that he will give his fellow members the benefit of his long experience of the port. Government will in due course give the subject their careful consideration.

VI.—Sanitation, Vital Statistics and Medical Relief.

45. Modification of the rules regarding the number and appointment of the non-official members of the Town Improvement Committees.

Mr. P. K. Kesava Pillai (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) requested that the privilege of electing non-official members to the Town Improvement Committees might be conferred upon the people and that the number of non-official members on the Committees might be increased. He said that it could not be denied that the people were fit to exercise the privilege of election. The elective system of returning members to the Assembly was working very well. Again, last year, when the representatives of the Assembly were asked to elect a non-official member to the Legislative Council, the privilege was discreetly exercised by them, as was evidenced by the fact that their nomination met with the approval of Government. The object of the Committees would, if the proposal be adopted, be more satisfactorily served, the local needs would be promptly attended to and the means for the same more readily found. The Member also observed that what he was advocating was really no change, as Section 7 of the Regulation already contained an enabling provision and it was only necessary to give practical effect to that provision.

As regards the non-official members, he said that their number should be raised to two-thirds of the total number of members on the Committees. It was clear from the reports of the Committees that the attendance of the official members and their work were not satisfactory. It was not possible for them to find much time and convenience in the midst of their other official work. The case of the non-official members was different and they would find time for the work and would not also fail to take interest in it. He therefore prayed that Government might be pleased to give the matter their best consideration.

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